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TO THE ELECTORS OF Hudson's Bay and Metchosen DISTRICT.

FELLOW COLONISTS: Having received an Address, signed by several of the Electors in our District, requesting me again to become a candidate for your suffrages, I assented at once to the invitation, and hope the step will meet with your approval.

Before proceeding to lay before you the course I intend in future to pursue, should you think fit again to confer the honor of election upon me, I will briefly give a chapter of the past.

After inquiry has been made by the House of Assembly into the financial condition of the Colony, it was learned that the only funds under the control of the Legislature were those raised by taxes instituted by its authority, and that the revenues received from lands, royalties, &c., were appropriated by the proprietors of the island to defraying the expense of the civil authority, surveying, church and school, as well as the making of roads, erection of bridges and buildings—in short, that the Hudson Bay Co. bore the whole expense of the Colony.

By referring to the deed of grant of the island to the H. B. Co., it was discovered that the island had been given to that body, upon condition that they should colonize it and bear the civil and military expenses; and that if at any time the Crown wished to resume possession of the island it could do so by repaying to the company the money theretofore expended, as also the value of their establishments. Such was the agreement between the two parties.

Knowing then that the H. B. Company were obliged to bear all expenses, it was determined, supplies being asked, not to grant any "until the entire revenues of the Colony were placed at the disposal of the Legislature, and town of Victoria represented;" by this constitutional means it was hoped that the control of the colonial revenues might be obtained—but that hope was not realized.

As the House of Assembly had not power over the colonial funds granted, it was further resolved, that as they could not command, so they would not recommend any appropriation therefrom; in order that the House might not be a party to the contraction of any debt; and that if expenses greater than the income were incurred, to leave the H. B. Co. to get the same repaid to them by the Home Government, according to the agreement existing between them and the Crown.

The resolutions, together with the reason of their adoption, were sent to Governor Douglas, and by him transmitted to the authorities at home, as well as subsequent one recommending "that Commissioners be sent to examine into the accounts before releasing the Hudson Bay Company from their responsibilities."

Her Majesty's Colonial Minister cannot therefore have been ignorant of the determination of the Assembly, and could, had he chosen, have taken steps to counteract it.

By maintaining this policy to the end of the session, the House of Assembly never became a party to the contraction of any debt, and therefore the people are not responsible for any. The H. B. Co. then have no claim upon this colony; whatever liabilities may have been incurred is a matter to be arranged between the H. B. Co. and the Home Government, according to the deed of grant.

The Home Government, having paid the just claims of the Company, cannot afterwards fairly, either be might or right, compel the payment by the Colony, for the simple reason that it cannot tax Colonies possessing a Legislature; however, so far as my knowledge of the colonial accounts, and the state of accounts between the Crown and the H. B. Co. extends, the latter can have no great claim against the former; and the Home Government, having first examined the account and agreed thereto, must, in common justice, pay it, and we shall hear no more about it; but if we do, the remedy will be in our own hands.

I have entered thus fully into this subject, because statements have been industriously circulated of heavy taxes being about to be thrust upon the Colony to pay for certain claims of the Hudson's Bay Company. These statements, I have shown, have no foundation in fact, and will turn out to be as untrue as many others of a similar nature, designed to get up for a particular purpose.

For the measures and principles I have advocated, I must refer to the records of the day; but to preserve the Free Port system has been my constant object; this system, now consented to by the imperial authority, has become an institution of our Colony, and is the very foundation of its prosperity.

I have advocated the extension of the reciprocity treaty of the United States to this island, and Governor Douglas had previously entered into a correspondence upon this subject, but without the desired result.

To foster the rise and progress of Victoria, appeared to me of the utmost importance, in that the existence of a large commercial town could be no other than of an

the greatest benefit to the agriculturists. Unfortunately the superiority of the H. B. Co. was overlooked by merchants.

The limited authority of the Assembly prevented alterations in the Land System, but a petition has been sent home to the proper authorities soliciting that power be granted to institute a land system commensurate with the requirements of the Colony.

I would now observe that the price of land was fixed at twenty shillings per acre by the Home Government, for the purpose of maintaining the civil authority, the formation of roads, &c. The land fund being the chief revenue, it follows that whilst on the one hand it gave to those having the control thereof almost unlimited power, on the other it deprived the Assembly of its legitimate authority and means of effecting many desirable improvements and reforms.

So much for the past.

Nevertheless, Vancouver Island prospers. In order to increase this prosperity, inducements must be held out to immigrants; settlement encouraged; our natural resources developed; commerce fostered; internal communications improved; and the Legislature exercise its proper authority and functions. I might promise all these things, as well as reforms in every department, and improvements everywhere; but I candidly confess, that under the present system, and whilst the colonial revenues are withheld from the jurisdiction of the Legislature, those reforms will be almost beyond its reach.

The obligations of the Hudson Bay Co. to this Colony have ceased, but I am not aware that this change will make any difference to the Legislature, as the imperial Government will now appropriate the land fund and apply it in the first place to the payment of the civil list, and to the support of any institution it may deem fit.

To extend the power of the Legislature is therefore essential; but this can only be obtained by supplying funds for the maintenance of the civil officers. It will therefore be a most important question for the Assembly to consider,—whether the expenses of the civil list can, shall or ought to be guaranteed or not, and a responsible government instituted.

The Governor has already declared his intention of introducing many reforms in the land system, and other matters, as well as measures calculated to encourage the improvement of stock, and promote the prosperity of farmers. Upon the liberality and completeness of these measures, very much depends the answer to the former question.

If the Colony, however, is to be self-supporting, the colonial revenues must necessarily be under the control of the Legislature.

It may be considered that too great stress is laid upon the jurisdiction over the revenue from land, &c., but it must be recollected that the expenses of various departments are paid therefrom, and whilst an independent fund exists for that purpose, any necessary reforms in those departments cannot be compelled. The strength of the Commons exists in granting or withholding supplies.

The present land system is the root of all evil; not only is it obstructive to settlement, but it supplies a fund which renders the Executive independent, and thrusts the expense of Government, which ought to be contributed by every one, upon the few; in fact, the landowners have hitherto paid nearly all the colonial expenditure. If power be granted to the House of Assembly to institute a new system, I would advocate that land be cheaper, speculation discouraged; districts laid open to settlement, occupation and improvement, only giving a pre-emption title to a liberal portion at the lowest rates. In the new system should also be included provision for leasing tracts of timbered lands at nominal prices, in order to encourage the erection of saw-mills, &c.; lands upon the coast for fishing stations, and rocks for quarries; reserves for schools and hospitals; the revenue derived from land should be applied to defray the expense of surveying and the making of roads only. It will be seen that such a system will destroy the present source of evil and of revenue and the House of Assembly, i. e. the people, be placed in a more commanding position.

The question as to how revenue is to be raised, very much depends upon the amount and for what purposes required; being ignorant of these, and of the future intentions of the Imperial Government, as also the want of statistics, renders a full answer impossible. I would however remark, that if a good land system be instituted, and the Colony has to bear the expense of the civil list, I shall be in favor of a direct system of taxation; but if otherwise, I contend it would be both unjust and ungenerous to tax agricultural labor and improvements for the general purposes of government; ungenerous, because they have hitherto supplied nearly

all the expenditure in the Colony; unjust, in that the money paid and still to be paid (instalments) for them, is in lieu of taxes. It must also be borne in mind that the revenue derived from licenses is applicable to general government purposes; an extension of this system, and the compulsory employment of stamps to render valid receipts, &c., would afford sufficient supplies to meet the demand. I need not say how dangerous it would be to enter upon a general system of taxation, whilst the Home Government can do what it pleases with the other revenues.

Export duties must not exist.

Under present circumstances, hospitals for the sick ought to be supported by voluntary contributions.

Victoria can and must in future bear her own expenses.

The payment of members for their services I shall resist.

A dominant church cannot be maintained.

I shall strenuously oppose any attempt of the Home Government to impose upon us any debts we have not of our own accord contracted.

The improvement of our roads is absolutely necessary. Although the expense of opening main roads is, according to agreement, to be paid for out of the land fund, the improvement of roads I consider to be incumbent upon the holder of property, who should supply either money, or what is equivalent, labor, for the purpose, in proportion to the stake he possesses.

The union of districts into counties, and the appointment of unpaid and resident commissioners to assess as well as direct the most important deviations and parts to be improved, would aid in obtaining the desired result. Of course, a more rapid and permanent improvement could be effected by raising a loan or letting the roads out to companies, but to these there are many objections. Main trunk roads are required to the northern and southern settlements, and such roads must pass through our district. A ferry at the Saanich arm would not be so advantageous or convenient.

The Gold Fields of British Columbia will supply us with immigrants.

Our present educational system is capable of great improvement; schools must be either more numerous and provision made for boarders, or the teachers must visit different places on separate days; I think, however, that schoolmistresses for the education of females are still more necessary.

The introduction of "drill" into our boy schools, would instill into our youth patriotism, bravery, and a martial character, and prepare them for the formation of militia corps hereafter. The necessity of a militia must be apparent to all and the sooner commenced the better.

With a view to elevate the aborigines, maintain peace and check their depredations, I would favor the introduction of agents into their midst, who at the same time should be teachers. Such a course would be beneficial, and if only one was prevented, economical. The Home Government, ought however, to protect us from foreign Indians, and supply funds for the purpose.

I go in for the independence of Vancouver Island, believing it to be our interest, advantageous to British Columbia, and beneficial to our Mother Country. Nevertheless, I believe it would be of reciprocal advantage for British Columbia to admit our productions free of duty, and for the vessels of both Colonies to have access to all rivers and harbors free of expense.

A more extended Executive is now required, but in so small a settlement as this the machinery of larger colonies is unnecessary, and here must be proportioned to our means. It all therefore be my object to see that an economy be attended with efficiency, be used in the public expenditure, and that returns shall not meet the creation of offices with nice salaries, nor sinecures for the incompetent.

The prevention of depredations upon stock would, I believe, be economically effected by agriculturists uniting for the purpose. Laws are required for the compulsory branding of cattle, relating to estrays, wild cattle, fencing, pasturage, &c. On these points I shall be glad of your advice and opinions. Of course many other laws are necessary, such as for the naturalization of aliens, the Registration of Deeds, Births, Deaths and Marriages, and regulating Joint Stock Companies, and several others—too numerous to mention.

I might extend this address indefinitely, but having touched upon the principal topics of the present, there only remains to be said that if it should please you to honor me again with your choice, unattached to any party, I shall, as heretofore, act honestly and independently, and whilst the general good of our country will be my constant aim, your special interest shall not be neglected by

J. S. HELMCKEN.